

DRAFT RESPONSE
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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as amended. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-12 (canceled)

Claim 13 (currently amended): A method of screening for drug candidates useful in treating depression, said method comprising: ~~(1) measuring the level of the biological activity of a wild-type or mutant APAF1, or a homolog, derivative, or fragment thereof, in both the presence of a drug and the absence of said drug,~~ measuring, in the presence and absence of a test compound, apoptosome activation of an apoptosome comprising wild-type APAF1 having SEQ ID NO:2, an APAF1 having SEQ ID NO:3, or an APAF1 having an amino acid substitution at a position selected from the group consisting of (a) Cys 450; (b) Gln 465; (c) Glu 777; (d) Asn 782; (e) Thr 953; (f) Leu 415; (g) Ser 357; (h) Asp 479; and (i) Glu at position 625; wherein if the level of the biological activity apoptosome activation is less in the presence of said drug test compound than in the absence of said drug test compound then said drug test compound is a drug candidate for treating depression and (2) further testing said drug candidate in a depression model.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method of claim 13 wherein said ~~biological activity~~ apoptosome activation is measured as the ability to form a protein:protein interaction.

Claim 15 (canceled):

Claim 16 (currently amended): The method of claim 13 wherein said ~~mutant~~ APAF1 (in reference to SEQ ID NO:2) ~~, or homolog, derivative, or fragment thereof,~~ is selected from the group consisting of: (a) Cys at position 450 substituted with Trp; (b) Gln at position 465 substituted with Arg; (c) Glu at position 777 substituted with Lys; (d) Asn at position 782 substituted with Thr; (e) Thr at position 953 substituted with Ala; (f)

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Leu at position 415 substituted with Pro; (g) Ser at position 357 substituted with Leu; (h) Asp at position 479 substituted with Glu; and ~~(f)~~ (i) Glu at position 625 substituted with Ala, all of which are in reference to SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim 17-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (currently amended): The method of claim 13, wherein said ~~biological~~ activity is apoptosome activation.